

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 7873

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS IR OVIP (BENSON, LUCY WILSON)
SUBJ: VISIT OF UNDER SECRETARY BENSON

1. UNDER SECRETARY BENSON HAD FULL, PRODUCTIVE FOUR-DAY VISIT TO IRAN AUGUST 28 - SEPTEMBER 1, IN WHICH SHE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN FIRST-HAND APPRECIATION OF GOI CAPABILITIES AND TECHNICAL COMPETENCE TO ABSORB SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO THE IIAF. IRANIANS DEMONSTRATED THAT IRANIAN PROGRESS TO DATE IS IMPRESSIVE, AS IS PLANNED FUTURE GROWTH TO ENSURE CONTINUED INCREASING CAPABILITIES.

2. GOI MADE CLEAR TO UNDER SECRETARY AT OUTSET THAT ANY QUESTIONS SHE HAD WOULD BE RESPONDED TO IN DETAIL, AND THAT ANY FACILITIES IN WHICH SHE HAD INTEREST WOULD BE OPEN TO HER. UNDER SECRETARY BEGAN VISIT WITH DISCUSSIONS WITH GENERAL AZHARI, CHIEF, SCS, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ZELLI, AND GENERAL TOUFANIAN AND HIS VMOW STAFF. BENSON HAD FURTHER EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH TOUFANIAN LATER IN HER VISIT. KEY POINT MADE BY AZHARI TO BENSON WAS THAT IRAN IS DETERMINED TO DEFEND ITSELF WITHOUT ANY OUTSIDE
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HELP; "IRAN WILL NOT BE ANYONE'S SATELLITE."

3. PRINCIPAL SITES VISITED BY UNDER SECRETARY WERE:
F-14 PROGRAM AT LHATAMI AIR BASE; HELICOPTER TRAINING PROGRAM AT IIAA TRAINING CENTER: IRAN ELECTRONICS INDUSTRIES (IEI) CO PLEX AT SHIRAZ; THE ADS-4 GROUND RADAR SITE ATOP KARAJ MOUNTAIN; IRAN HELICOPTER

SUPPORT AND RENEWAL COMPANY (IHSRC); IRAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES (IACI); IIAF FIRST TRANSPORT WING AT MEHRABAD; AND THE IBEX C-130 AIRCRAFT. AT ALL INSTALLATIONS BENSON VISITED, SHE HAD OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCUSSION WITH BASE COMMANDERS, PROGRAM DIRECTORS, AND KEY STAFF. FOR DOWN COUNTRY PORTION OF VISIT BENSON FLEW IN IIAF 707 TRANSPORT, AND IIAF AND IAA HELICOPTERS, WITH ALL IRANIAN CREWS IN EACH INSTANCE.

4. AT KHATAMI BENSON HAD OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT PHOENIX MISSILE STORAGE AREA AND WAS STRUCK BY EXTENSIVE SECURITY MEASURES EMPLOYED, INCLUDING TRIPLE FENCING AROUND AND ARMED GUARDS THROUGHOUT THE AREA. EXTENSIVE TRAINING EFFORT TO PROVIDE GOI SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN VARIOUS PROGRAMS PARTICULARLY APPARENT AT IEI WHERE BENSON HAD CHANCE TO TALK WITH NUMBER OF TECHNICIANS WHO HAD RECEIVED TRAINING AT PAHLAVI UNIVERSITY IN SHIRAZ AS PART OF IE PROGRAM. ALTHOUGH ADS-4 KARAJ SITE IS CLOSEST OF POSSIBLE MOUNTAINTOP GROUND RADAR NETWORK TO TEHRAN, ITS REMOTENESS, LARGE MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS AND EXTENSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE BASE INCLUDING LENGTHY ACCESS ROAD ALL CLEARLY APPARENT, AND UNDERSCORE CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT DIFFICULTIES WITH MOUNTAINTOP LOCATIONS.

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5. IACI EXPANSION PROGRAM OVER NEXT THREE PLUS YEARS WILL MARKEDLY ENHANCE ALREADY IMPRESSIVE AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR CAPABILITY. ALL IACI MANAGEMENT IS IRANIAN. UNDER SECRETARY SAW F-4S, F-5S, AND C-130S UNDERGOING REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE, AS WELL AS ENGINE OVERHAUL ACTIVITY RELATED TO ENTIRE INVENTORY OF IIAF AND IRAN AIR. CONTAINMENT MODIFICATION OF FIRST PORTION OF F-14 AIRCRAFT FOR IIAF ALSO BEING DONE BY GRUMMAN AT IACI, AND IRANIANS INSISTED FOR SECURITY REASONS THAT THIS BE DONE IN SEPARATE HANGAR WITH NO OTHER ACTIVITY PERMITTED THERE DURING MODIFICATION. AT FIRST TRANSPORT WING BENSON WAS BRIEFED ON SINGULAR DEGREE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY IIAF ALREADY HAS ACHIEVED WITH 707S, AND PROGRAM FOR ACHIEVING COMPARABLE SUCCESS IN 747S OVER NEXT YEAR. IN IBEX AIRCRAFT UNDER SECRETARY SAW IRANIAN PERSONNEL HANDLING COMPLICATED SCOPES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT OF THEIR OWN.

6. UNDER SECRETARY WILL, OF COURSE, BE PROVIDING FULL DETAILS AND IMPRESSIONS OF HER QUICK VISIT UPON HER RETURN TO WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, OVERALL

IMPRESSION IS THAT IRAN HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT
PROGRESS TOWARDS OPERATING, MAINTAINING, AND
SUPPORTING VARIOUS AIRCRAFT AND EQUIPMENT IN IIAF
INVENTORY AND THAT BASED ON IRAN'S RECORD TO DATE
IT REASONABLE TO EXPECT IIAF TO ACHIEVE COMPARABLE
SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE WITH ONGOING AND CONTEMPLATED
NEW PROGRAMS. THIS JUDGMENT WOULD INCLUDE AWACS,
WHERE IIAF HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED CAPABILITY TO
OPERATE, MAINTAIN AND SUPPORT 707 AIRFRAME, AND HAS
GIVEN EVIDENCE THAT IT CAN PROVIDE ADEQUATE
TRAINABLE MANPOWER AND OTHER RESOURCES NECESSARY
TO OPERATE, SUPPORT AND MAINTAIN HIGHLY COMPLEX
AND TECHNICALLY ADVANCED SYSTEMS, SUCH AS F-14
AND IBEX PROGRAM.
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